

Medgar Evers College
Department of Mass Communications, Creative and Performing Arts and Speech
and
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

Syllabus (subject to revision)

Hip Hop: Historical, Social and Political Discourses

MASS 473

Instructors: Hunter, Phillips

Course Description and Philosophy

Certain musics reflect changes and advances in the historical, social and by extension political fabric of American society that can be symbolized and viewed as catalysts in the development of landmark legal decisions, the formation of changes in the society's social institutions and voices of sentiment that far exceed aesthetic appreciation. *Hip Hop: historical, social and political discourses* will present the above thesis through key music compositions that highlight aural and visual representations to students through connections that may be illustrated in legal decisions that result in the origins of laws, in the historical record in U.S. society from the rise of the Jim Crow era (1896, Plessy vs. Ferguson), to its dismantling by Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) and continuing through the end of the Vietnam Conflict (April 30, 1975, the Fall of Saigon). Contemporary society is extrapolated to show how the development of rap and hip hop are contributions from these events. This is a period of advancement characterizes the most creative outpouring of production for African Americans, or any ethnic group for that matter, in the U.S. 20th and early 21st centuries.

The Essential Learning Outcomes

The essential learning outcomes of *Hip Hop: Historical, Social and Political Discourses* are interdisciplinary and combine an arts discipline with three related social science foci: history, sociology, and politics.

- Knowledge of human cultures, particularly the ideal of the “American melting pot” with its polysynthetic ideas
- A development of students abilities to reason intellectually, analytically and discursively in a variety of disciplines
- Build on entrenched aesthetic attitudes and offer new methods of critical thinking for personal and social responsibilities
- Integrate knowledge initially from an art/humanities point of view then allow for the coalescing of the synthesis of ideas that result from discussion, evaluation and reasoning

Student Opportunities/Responsibilities

It will interest the students because urban popular music, most listened to by our students, will be the focus that will show a commonality to content to the social and political statements that resonate in contemporary music that echo in earlier historical eras. It will also provide the possibility of an elective that address knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the learning outcome(s).

Students must follow weekly plan which provides all topics pertinent to the development of the discourse. This course involves research with emphasis on reading and synthesis of assigned materials. It is therefore necessary to remain vigilant with the weekly plan and performed the assigned task in a timely manner. Each week represent one module that will contain all the necessary topics and assignments to be completed. See the attached Weekly Plan.

Learning Objectives

Students will develop discourses, write analytical narratives and find relationships between the assigned music and art production through critical analysis discourses in the following topics:

- 1) Comprehension of the importance of landmark Supreme Court decisions with the goal of ascertaining units of oppression in racism as expressed in the focus genre;
- 2) Discuss the opposition to the advancement of new ideas in legal and legislative arenas both within and outside of the culture; and
- 3) Utilize the production of specific music content and other arts expressions in general as the rubric to develop linkages in the flux of ideas that may evolve when considering disciplines of history, sociology, politics and economic entrepreneurial creativity for these genres within the given time frame.

Required Texts

DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New American Library, 1969. Chapters 1, 2 4 and 13.

Gates, Henry Louis and West, Cornel, “*Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization*”, in The Future of the Race, Knopf, New York. 1996. Pages 53-112.

Killens, John Oliver. *The Cotillion*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971. Selections.

Murray, Albert. *Stompin’ the Blues*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976. Chapters 1-4, 10-12.

Southern, Eileen. *The Music of Black Americans: A History*. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1997. Chapters 11-14.

West, Cornel. “*The new cultural politics of difference.*” In *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Simon During. Second Edition. p. 203. London and New York: Routledge. 2001.

Other selected texts posted on Blackboard External Links on or library e-Reserves

Grading

1. Students' grades are cumulatively determined by their performance on individual assignments, class participation, midterm and final examination. All tasks will be averaged for the final grade.
2. Medical excuses will be required for students who miss a test and wish to take a make-up examination. Non-excused absences from tests will count as an F (zero).
3. Students missing more than three classes may be dropped from the course and assigned a grade of WU.

Contact Information

Dr. Delridge Hunter, Professor
delridge@oponline.net

Moses Phillips, Lecturer
mphillips@mec.cuny.edu
718-270-4921
Room 1003D, Bedford Building